

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
July 8, 2010 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Council Chambers – 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Tom Bassett-Dilley, Joerg Albrecht, Garret Eakin, Frank Heitzman, Bob Lempera, Rosanne McGrath, Chris Morris, Drew Niermann, Gary Palese, Tony Quinn, Carmen Vitello

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, Urban Planner

MINUTES

Motion by Heitzman to approve the June 10, 2010 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by Morris. Motion approved 11-0.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. 252 and 256 Lake Street (Patel)** – Request for a fourth one-year extension of the Certificate of Appropriateness approved on July 20, 2006 and last extended through July 20, 2010 (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*)
- B. HPC 07-52: 644 Madison Street (Foley-Rice Cadillac)** – Preliminary determination of eligibility for Historic Landmark designation – Request to table consideration: **Continued from June 10, 2010.**

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Consent Agenda. Second by Eakin. Motion approved 11-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

- A. Historic Landmark: Preliminary Determination of Eligibility, 178 Forest Avenue**
Club president Mila Tellez and other Club members were present.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the property was nominated under four criteria:

- 1: Significance as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the State or the United States.*
- 2. Location as a site of an historic event, with a significant effect on the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States.*
- 3: Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States.*
- 6: Identification as the work of an architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois and the United States.*

Mila Tellez, Nineteenth Century Club President, thanked Sherlyn Reid, Barbara Ballinger and Millie Erhardt for organizing the submittal of the landmark nomination. It is a significant building, and already a landmark in the community. They hope the Historic Preservation Commission will grant Historic Landmark status on the building.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that architect James Fyfe designed buildings of a great variety. The building has wonderful detail and meets the criteria for designation.

Commissioner Heitzman recommended that the Club also designate the historic interior.

Ms. Tellez stated that they would consider it but move forward with the existing nomination.

Commissioner Eakin stated that it is a pleasure attending functions in the building. It is quiet, elegant and fits in well with its surroundings. It has excellent detail and there is cohesion from the exterior to the interior. He agrees that the interior should be designated. He appreciates how the building has been maintained.

Motion by Heitzman to approve a Preliminary Determination of Eligibility for the Historic Landmark nomination for 178 Forest Avenue under four Criteria for Designation as outlined in the nomination (1, 2, 3, 6). Second by Albrecht. Motion approved 11-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

A. Public Hearing for Historic Landmark Designation

Chair Bassett-Dilley opened the public hearing and provided an overview of the process. He provided an overview of the property at 317 N. Kenilworth Avenue (*William A. Douglass House*, Patton & Fisher, 1893). He noted that owner consent is on file.

Darius Povilaitis, property owner, thanked the Historic Preservation Commission for their consideration. It is an honor to have landmark status. They have worked hard to restore the house.

Chair Bassett Dilley noted that the property was determined by the Commission at the June 10, 2010 meeting to meet the following criteria for landmark designation:

1. *Significance as an example of the architectural and historic heritage of the Village of Oak Park.*
3. *Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the State or the United States.*
5. *Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of significant architectural style.*
6. *Identification as the work of an architect and builder whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park.*

He asked for public testimony in support or opposition to the landmark designation. There was no public testimony. He noted that Patton & Fisher are important architects for Oak Park.

Commissioner Eakin stated that the house has beautiful details and an elegant façade. The porte cochere is beautifully integrated. It's a wonderful building that he's learned a lot from.

Motion by Morris to accept the landmark nomination report for 317 N. Kenilworth Avenue as the findings of fact. Second by Albrecht. Motion approved 11-0.

Motion by Albrecht to forward the findings of fact and resolution to the Village Board of Trustees recommending approval of 317 N. Kenilworth Avenue as a Historic Landmark. Second by Morris. Motion approved 11-0.

Motion by Heitzman to close the public hearing. Second by Niermann. Motion approved 11-0.

- C. **HPC 10-22: 220 Wesley Avenue (Roberts)** – Certificate of Appropriateness for partial demolition of front porch (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee**
Property owners Deborah Pieritz and John Roberts were present.

Planner Kaarre provided an overview of the project. The proposal includes the following:

- Install 80 s.f. of aluminum flashing/gutters custom bent to fit existing profile.
- Remove and rebuild the front porch roof, including the replacement of the clay tiles with asphalt shingles.
- Replace a portion of the metal crown molding and fascia with wood molding and fascia to match.
- Remove and replace beadboard soffits.
- Re-roof the bay window on south side (asphalt shingles with asphalt shingles).

The ARC reviewed the application at its May 26 and June 23 meetings. The committee noted that the Architectural Review Guidelines recommend repairing rather than replacing historic character-defining features or replacing in kind. The ARC did not feel it was justified or appropriate to change the materials on the porch roof from clay tile to asphalt or the porch soffits from pressed metal to wood.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the drawings weren't clear that the replacement design would match.

Deborah Pieritz, one of the property owners, read a statement noting that the porch is not highly visible, replacing in kind is cost prohibitive, and that repair will be done if feasible.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that her position is understood and respected. The HPC must be consistent when implementing the Guidelines. Preservation principles are to repair and retain historic materials. The ARC did not see a reason for the replacement.

Ms. Pieritz noted that the porch roof is sinking, the framing is giving way and the details are paper thin. They will keep anything that can be re-used. The roof structure needs to be taken apart and rebuilt. The main roof on the house was re-roofed 20 years ago and the clay tile removed and this should have been done then.

The HPC discussed the submitted drawings and what level of detail is shown.

Ms. Pieritz noted that the contractor, All High Work, will put back the pressed metal details if they can get it off in one piece. She understood the clay tiles were not in great shape and would be expensive to put new. It's not all that visible.

Chair Bassett-Dilley reviewed the Roof Policy guidelines #1, #2 and #7. Asphalt is at the bottom of appropriate replacement materials for clay tile. It won't replicate the profile. The HPC must answer two questions: 1) Are you comfortable approving the application as submitted? And 2) is the porch small enough and far enough back that the proposed changes won't change the character of the building?

Commissioner McGrath noted that the dentils will be replaced with wood.

Commissioner Albrecht isn't sure they can demand retention of these materials when they are not highly visible. Using wood would be within the historic context.

Commissioner Lempera disagreed. The clay tile roof is an important detail. It's a small area but is clearly visible. Rebuild the roof and put the clay tiles back.

Commissioner Niermann stated that the overall details are being replicated. It is reasonable to use wood. The tile roof seems to be disintegrating. They may only save half and new ones won't match exactly. It's a big expense for a very small job.

Commissioner Eakin stated that the clay tile is part of the Neoclassical language of the building. It would be a shame to lose it. The small façade matches the cornice on the house. It's important to the unity of the building. The drawings are questionable. Wood is okay for replacing the metal, you won't be able to tell, but the details should remain.

Commissioner Morris understood how the owners would feel this is a minor element, but the HPC is charged with preserving historic character through the retention of historic elements. The Guidelines allow for replacement materials in some instances. It seems appropriate to consider replacement materials for the roof and fascia. The larger tile roof is already gone. They should replicate the details.

Commissioner Lempera noted that the roof size and shape can't be maintained with asphalt.

Commissioner McGrath noted that the drawings are unclear regarding the gutters. The ogee shape won't match what's there.

Ms. Pieritz noted that they are re-lining the existing inlaid gutters. Her understanding is to rebuild them as is.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the drawings should reflect what's there and what will be done. Any approval will have a condition for submittal of clarified drawings.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that the written proposal states that they are relining the gutters, but it doesn't match the drawing. The only change in integrity is the roof materials.

The HPC discussed the definition of "technically infeasible."

Commissioner Palese stated that wood was okay as long as the details remain. The roof change doesn't bother him because you can barely see it. Shingles remain consistent with the rest of the roof.

Commissioner Vitello agreed. The dentils and gutters are the most consistent feature. The roof is the least visible feature on the porch.

Commissioner Quinn noted that the soffit details are the most important. The main roof is already asphalt shingles. The dentils and soffit details should be kept.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the majority is okay with the conditions. We hate to lose historic materials but he's not convinced the metal will last. Wood is okay. He would like to see the clay tiles remain, but asphalt won't detract from the character of the house. If the HPC can find more appropriate material sources would the owner be open to considering new tiles? The HPC is voting on structural repair vs. replacement of details.

Motion by Heitzman to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 220 Wesley Avenue to repair where possible or replace the cornice in the same profile. Remove, restructure and replace the clay tiles unless not feasible.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the application is to rebuild the details and replace the clay tile roof with asphalt shingles.

Motion by Morris to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 220 Wesley Avenue as submitted with the condition to provide clarification of the elements of the fascia to be repaired or replaced and those that are being replaced shall match the existing materials in profile. The HPC will offer guidance on acceptable alternative materials to asphalt. Second by Albrecht. Vote: 8-3.

AYE: Albrecht, Morris, Vitello, Niermann, McGrath, Quinn, Palese, Bassett-Dilley

NAY: Lempera, Eakin, Heitzman

- D. HPC 10-28: 125 S. Scoville Avenue (Blakesley)** – Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a house (*Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District*): **Forwarded from the Architectural Review Committee**
Property owner Don Blakesley was present.

Chair Bassett-Dilley provided an overview of the project. The proposal is to demolish the existing house and construct a new house in keeping with the character of the historic district. The house was constructed in 1919 at 419 S. Elmwood and was moved to its current location in 1963, prior to the designation of the historic district in 1983.

Don Blakesley stated that the house was moved there in 1963 for his grandmother. He bought the house with the desire to restore it, but his daughter has severe health issues. The house is too expensive to repair with mold, water and lead issues. It will cost too much – a home is an investment. His job is to protect his family. A new house will only cost \$60,000 more.

Drew Niermann stated that he is recusing himself as he provided cost estimates to the owner for rehab and new construction. He didn't consider health issues/remediation or financial incentives.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the Guidelines don't discuss cost much, but the ordinance does. If a COA is denied, then economic hardship can be considered. He noted that the ARC requested a legal opinion from counsel which says that the fact the house was moved in 1963 does not in and of itself make the house a non-contributing resource. That would be based on the character of the house. The period of significance for the historic district ends before the house was moved (roughly 1870s through 1920s). They wouldn't allow that now. The owner noted that other homes on the block have a different scale, appearance, and are from a different period (1890s).

Mr. Blakesley noted that he has spoken to the neighbors and none of them are opposed to this.

The HPC discussed the changes to the home at 107 N. Scoville to the north.

Planner Kaarre noted that he understood that project resulted in the Village changing the definition of demolition in the preservation ordinance in 1999.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that their decision must be based on the ordinance and Guidelines. He doesn't question the sincerity of the applicant. He asked for commission comments on whether the property is a non-contributing resource.

Commissioner McGrath asked if there was any precedent for applicants to challenge the status of a property.

Planner Kaarre noted that the issue had come up for the properties at 215 and 217 N. Grove, 252 and 256 Lake Street, and 219 and 221 S. Kenilworth, to list a few examples.

Commissioner McGrath asked if the 1983 National Register nomination for the historic district conducted analysis of each individual property.

Commissioner Heitzman stated that the nomination was prepared by Daniel Bluestone. Contributing status is based on date of construction. This property probably fell through the cracks.

Commissioner Albrecht noted that moving a property is considered demolition under the ordinance. Technically this property was demolished in 1963 when it was moved outside the period of significance.

Commissioner Morris noted that can be misleading. Context is important and each request should be viewed on a case by case basis.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that a property is contributing under the National Register guidelines if it was present during the period of significance and possesses sufficient integrity. This would be non-contributing unless it possesses individual significance. It was not present during the period of significance.

Mr. Blakesley asked if there was a list of moved houses.

Chair Bassett-Dilley did not think there was an official list of houses moved throughout the decades. It was more common in the past.

Commissioner Morris asked if the characteristics of the house make it contributing. The legal opinion stated that the date it was moved does not make it non-contributing.

Commissioner Vitello stated that the house wasn't there originally. The historic fabric doesn't look like the rest of the neighborhood.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that the nomination points out the diversity of building types in the district.

Commissioner Vitello stated that the house didn't join its neighbors until 1963.

Mr. Blakesley stated that they are proposing to build a house the fits the neighborhood.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the characteristics of the house should be taken into account.

Commissioner Morris stated that if they discount the move date, they need other justification.

Commissioner Albrecht stated that it is a very ordinary house which sticks out on the block. It wasn't meant to be there. It probably was in scale on Elmwood. This is an extraordinary circumstance. It's mediocre, it doesn't contribute, and it is out of character.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that although precedent is important, this must be dealt with on a case by case basis. These are unique conditions.

Mr. Blakesley stated that he wouldn't want to tear it down if it were a Queen Anne. They are an old family in the Village.

Commissioner Lempera noted that he was sympathetic, but he feels its contributing and is concerned about precedence.

Commissioner Albrecht felt it is non-contributing. The motion should be specific about the move date outside the period of significance and other specific issues to prevent precedence.

Commissioner Vitello stated that this is such a unique situation. She doesn't see much of a precedent. It was moved after the period of significance.

Commissioner Palese noted that the Hemingway Interim House was moved recently into a historic district.

Commissioner Morris is uncomfortable going against the legal opinion.

Motion by Albrecht to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 125 S. Scoville Avenue for demolition based on the reassessment of the house as a Non-Contributing Resource based on the fact that the house was moved to its current location outside the period of significance in combination with the fact that the house does not conform to the character of the block it sits on. Second by Quinn. Vote: 6-4.

AYE: Eakin, Albrecht, Vitello, McGrath, Quinn, Bassett-Dilley

NAY: Lempera, Morris, Heitzman, Palese

E. Archaeology in Oak Park

John Tandarich, local scientist and educator at Triton College, provided an overview of archaeology in Oak Park. The purpose of the presentation is to generate interest by the HPC in a collaborative educational effort on the subject. He provided a background on the subject. He became interested in the subject while a student at Fenwick High School and Loyola University and the discoveries at Cahokia Mounds. He discussed what types of artifacts may still be found in Oak Park, including 13,000 years of Native American cultures. Artifacts have been found in Thatcher Woods, River Forest, Forest Park and Oak Park. The Forest Park Public Library has been a repository for donated artifacts from Forest Home Cemetery for over 100 years. He has found artifacts in Oak Park in construction debris, including a 13,000 year old Clovis Point near Unity Temple. The Oak Park Spit was once a shore line. Other artifacts have been found in Mills Park and elsewhere.

The Historical Society and Triton College are beginning a collaborative project called "Rediscovering Oak Park" to educate citizens of this area, beginning at the 4th and 5th grade levels, about local archaeology. They are asking for the HPC's collaboration in this project.

Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that the Historic Preservation Plan focuses on education, and mentions archaeology.

Planner Kaarre recommended that this be discussed by the HPC Education Committee.

F. Mid-Year Review of 2010 Work Plan

Planner Kaarre reviewed the HPC's 2010 Work Plan and what has yet to be started or completed. This includes the Preservation Awards event, updating the Ordinance and Guidelines, updating the Potential Landmark Inventory, completing the National Register nomination for the Cicero Fire House No. 2, investigating the creation of financial incentives for historic property owners, creating a Stone Sidewalk program, providing outreach on the potential local boundary expansion for the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District, and organizing an historic church walk.

Commissioner Heitzman noted that sustainability is a goal of the Village Board. They should concentrate on updating the preservation ordinance and Guidelines. He recommended creating an "early permit review" process and an archaeological survey.

Commissioner Morris noted that the Board directed the HPC to prioritize the action items in the Historic Preservation Plan taking into account the recommendations of the Steering Committee. Then the HPC can set its short-term and long-term goals. She recommends a day-long retreat to accomplish his. She has someone to facilitate the process.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that he will follow up with the Village Manager on the stone sidewalks.

Commissioner Lempera noted that he suggested creating a moratorium on removing the stone until a program is in place.

Commissioner Albrecht suggested landmarking the stone sidewalks.

Commissioner Morris noted that Section 106 review requires that we review any changes to the stone sidewalks.

The HPC will continue its 2011 Work Plan discussion following prioritization of the Historic Preservation Plan action items.

G. I-290/Eisenhower Expressway

Commissioner Morris provided an overview. The Village has concerns over the threat to historic resources, and the character and livability of the Village in general, along the Eisenhower Expressway, depending on what IDOT plans to do in regards to the potential expansion of the expressway. The Village asked the HPC to investigate National Register and local landmark designation of the center exit ramps, which are unique, and other adjacent properties. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Federal Highway Administration signed an agreement in 2005 creating a blanket exemption of the interstate highway system from Section 106 review. Their options include trying to list the ramps on the National Register if they can show national significance – this would be honorary and not trigger any review, and to conduct public education and outreach.

Chair Bassett-Dilley stated that he was concerned the HPC is being used as a tool to block the expansion. After further review, the center ramps are unique with a very small footprint and interesting history.

Commissioner Albrecht loved the idea of doing further research into the idea of preserving the center ramps.

Commissioner Eakin stated that the idea did not interest him at all.

Commissioners Lempera and Palese also support the idea of investigating their preservation.

Commissioner Morris noted that they should also investigate the flanking neighborhoods to determine potential Landmarks and historic districts. The recent survey by students at the School of the Art Institute has identified the Arts District and several possible Landmarks. Further investigation in other areas is still needed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Architectural Review Committee: Report on June 23, 2010 meeting. The ARC reviewed the porch alterations at 220 Wesley Avenue and recommended changes; approved a rear addition at 603 Woodbine Avenue; approved a rear addition at 223 N. Marion Street; reviewed the proposed house demolition at 125 S. Scoville Avenue; and reviewed front porch expansion at 147 N. Cuyler Avenue and recommended alterations.

Education Committee: Report on June 24, 2010 meeting. The Education Committee discussed the following items: the Preservation Awards/Landmarks event in September, including invitations designed by Chris Payne, educational workshops, outreach on the Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District boundary expansion, and outreach on the potential Arts District and South Town designations. The regular meeting date was changed to the fourth Monday of the month.

Chair Bassett-Dilley's Last Meeting: Chair Bassett-Dilley noted that this is his last meeting on the HPC. He has served two 3-year terms. Chris Morris will assume the Chair position at the August meeting. His time on the HPC has been fabulous. It's been an honor to serve on the commission and has been an education for him, as well as the longest job. He will attend the July ARC meeting and then he will be done. Commissioner Morris thanked Tom for his hard work and leadership. She learned a lot from him. He will be missed.

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions: Commissioner Morris noted that the NAPC meeting is coming up on July 28-August 1 in Grand Rapids, MI. The IHPA is providing scholarships for commissioners to attend. This only happens every other year and is a great learning experience.

ADJOURN

Motion by Morris to adjourn. Second by Albrecht. Motion approved: 11-0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m. Minutes prepared by Doug Kaarre, Urban Planner.